The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The Blessed Unity.

With soil and seed at one
The blossom's born;
But, blending not at all,
Death holds them both in scorn.

When birds and winds do mate,
The song's at flight;
But could they learn to hate,
O lost, O dead delight!

When violets wed the sun,
'Tis beauty rare;
But, when their loving's done,
Waste sadness everywhere.

O perfect Love Divine,
In my heart be!
Then will thy beauty shine,
Revealed in me!

Then will thy graces show
In all my ways,
As in the lily glow
The sun's pure rays.

So will my brothers learn
Thy tender grace,
With longings great will yearn
To see thy holy face,—

That face,—the heavenly sky,
So bright, so blue,
Where human hearts may fly,
Love-strong, love-true.

JOHN M. SCOTT.

The Education of Character.

A SERMON

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

PHIL. iii. 12.—"Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect."

In one of the galleries at Florence there is a collection of the portraits of great artists painted by themselves. Now a fine portrait is something more than what is called "a likeness," and this is why the photographer's art—interesting and convenient as it is—cannot rank with the art of painting. If to make an accurate picture of features and figure were enough, then photography might suffice us, and indeed photography is a great deal better than about four-fifths of the portraits painted. But there are portraits which are also great pictures, and in which there is something more than features and figure, and fine flesh painting and skilful draperies—a soul is there. No one can see Mr. Watts's noble portraits of Joachim, Burne Jones, and Cardinal Manning—to mention only three out of a great host, without feeling that the artist has seized on the salient point of his sitter's character, and impressed that on his canvas. The portrait of Joachim is more than a portrait, it is the very genius of music; as Manning might be taken for a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church, and Burne Jones a dreamer of dreams born out of due time. Watts, like every great artist, will

have his sitter's best part. The lines of meanness, covetousness, weakness, and sensuality have no attraction for him, and he will not dwell upon them in detail. His portraits are, therefore sometimes imperfect, photographically speaking; they are nevertheless, as studies of character, some of the finest portraits in the world. Not the least striking of Watts's achievements is a portrait of himself, painted for the Florentine gallery. It is a profound study of character. There is in it a noble simplicity, a deep human sympathy, an earnest devotion to great ends and something which suggests the poetic temperament. It seems to me an especially difficult thing for a man thus to paint himself and depict his own character. Only a great artist could carry it out with success.

Man is an artist on his own character. We are all at work fashioning a picture, creating an image, painting a portrait in colours which time cannot fade, and on a canvas which age cannot moulder away. Every man is like a sculptor with a rough block of marble put into his hands which he has to make into something, into a godlike figure or a reeling form, into a man or only the caricature of a man; and rare it is to see produced a work of art. It is only in part we are shaped by others; we shape ourselves. Our portrait is not the work of some strange artist; it is our own hands that fashioned it. Each one of us is a "study of character," and what that character is depends on ourselves. And sometimes it seems that just as it is easier for an artist to paint other people's portraits than to paint his own, so it is easier to fashion another's character—a child's or a friend's—than to train our own to use and beauty. Self-culture is the most difficult of all human tasks.

But this also is our glory; it is this that raises us above the brutes. It is true of every man that to a very large extent he is what he makes himself to be. This is not true of the lower creatures. They are what birth and environment compel them to be. They do not in any respect control their own destinies. It is by no deliberate effort of will, and by no pursuit of thought-out aims that they arrive at such perfection as is theirs. It is otherwise with man. It is true he cannot make one hair of his head black or white. But *character* is almost as much under his control as are the canvas and colours under that of the painter. Our passions, thoughts, inclinations, sympathies, antipathies, desires, and appetites are at the disposal of our will — not indeed at first any more than our hands at first are at the disposal of our will. We get the mastery of our hands by practice. Not at first can the apprentice hold the chisel right; not at first can the musician strike the keys as he would; not at first can the artist make his fingers and pencil obey his purpose: there is a training and discipline of the hand before we possess it and are able to use it as the instrument of our will. So it is with all the prominent features of characters. Not at first can we bend them to our will, but by practice we can, so that it is true we are what we have gradually made ourselves. Doubtless many influences outside our own choice have co-operated or have been overcome in the process. Something is due to hereditary forces, something to environment, to our age, to our race, to our civilisation. But whatever influences contributed to make us what we are, we yielded ourselves to them; we appropriated them, and when full allowance is made for them they are not so much as our own efforts, choices, and desires. We are each of us in the long run what, using the gifts God has given us, we have made ourselves to be.

Man then is an artist; he is busy all day long painting his own portrait. The colours and the canvas are put into his hands, and it is for him so to study his art, so to practice it, so to chose his masters and examples, that the result shall be a human soul, fairer to look upon than any portrait on the walls of the National Gallery.

Only this portrait has its own peculiarity—it is never finished. It is not like a work completed in the artist's studio within a definite time, and then sent out to be for ages what it is to-day, except for the mellowing work of Time. It is always being re-touched; however beautiful there is always something more to be done at it; still it calls for loving labour; the artist exclaims: "Not as though I had attained, or were already made perfect." We are told of some of Mr. Watts' pictures — "Love and Death," for instance—that he is always taking them back into his studio for alteration and improvement. But the portrait we are at work on

never leaves the studio. We can never look at our character as a thing apart, and say: "There! it is finished; there is nothing more to be done." To the end, with every true soul, there is a sense of imperfection; there are colours to be deepened, or softened, or brightened; there are things to take out, blemishes to correct; there is something in our mind's eye we have not yet reached. With St. Paul, in old age, we say: "I press forward."

It might seem that Paul, of all men, might have been satisfied with his character as it was. He had attained to such a strength, beauty, and devotion of soul, as the world has rarely seen. A life-time of trial, discipline, and experience had fashioned a character of marvellous power. From childhood he had been given to serious thoughts. In manhood he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision." He had used to the full his wonderful gifts; he was revered by all who knew him—and here, surely, was a man who might have said: "Let us rest and be thankful." But no, he had not yet attained. Old and experienced as he was he felt like Ulysses that "all experience is an arch where thro' gleams untravelled worlds." The words of Ulysses might have been his—

> "How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
> To rest unburnished, not to shine in use!
> As tho' to breathe were life,
> Something ere the end may yet be done."

The picture, beautiful as it was, needed still the artist's thought and care.

It is this continual growth of character I would press upon you. There are many who have attained a fair level of success in moral and religious life. They have reached, perhaps not without effort, the average of their class, or church, or age. They have learned to govern the grossness of appetite and the fierceness of temper; they have schooled themselves to patience; they are much that is admirable. And they are, on the whole content, well satisfied with what they have done and become. It is enough; why labour still at the portrait? How rarely do we see much growth in character after mid-life. Habits get stereotyped, life runs more and more in a groove, and we say of a man: "He will never surprise us with any new grace or generosity—what he is now, he has been the last twenty years, and will be to the end of the chapter." How many of us—how few of us!—are finer and nobler in soul to-day than we were in early manhood? How many of us have any wider and deeper conceptions of deity? How many of us have kept an open mind for the new light shining upon us from God's world? Saddest of all, how many of us are going on practising the same faults which marked our youth? We are as irritable now as then; as uncharitable in judgment, as hasty in speech, as poor in gifts, as narrow in mind—and we are *content*. On the whole we think we *have* attained, and we have given up working on the portrait. The ideal no longer draws us onward; through the distance no longer comes a gleam of what is higher; the glory of heavenly things no longer gains on the shade; we are well satisfied with what we are.

All this may be summarised in two injunctions:—

1. Believe in your own capacity of growth. There is no end to what a man may become. Every achievement is a stepping-stone to another. Your faculties have a reach that many of you have no suspicion of. We have scarcely any of us "arrived." Not yet are we in possession of our powers. There are whole tracts of life as yet uncleared, uncultivated. It is possible for us to be a hundred times more than what we are now—more in love, more in thought, more in magnaminity, more in will-power. There is no measurable limit to a man's power of learning, nor to his possibilities of goodness, nor to his growth in character. Of course you must grow according to your own bent. God seeks variety, not uniformity. "All flesh is not the same flesh." "One star differeth from another star in glory." And this man's character will specially shine in one way, and that man's in another. Christians are not to stand in rows, all of one height, one colour, one shape, like rows of cabbages in the kitchen-garden of heaven! Allowance is to be made for constitution, temperament, gifts, circumstances, climate and soil. All growths are not to be the same growths. There is one growth of the violet, and another of the rose, and another of the oak, and another of the cedar. Each is to grow according to the laws of its own vitality,—and one is an artist and one a philanthropist, and one loves the shade and another needs the sunlight, and you are a loving John while your

brother is an impetuous Peter. That we *do* grow, that we believe in growth to the end and growth beyond to be the law of our being, is the important thing.

2. Keep your ideals bright and always before you. That is, lift higher and higher your standard. If you have a low standard you may soon be content, and such content will inevitably breed conceit. Lift up the standard. Let it not be enough that you rise to the standard required by the law of the land, or by social propriety, or by church measurement. It is a shame for a man to excuse himself for his want of growth by saying that he has done what is required of him by others. No man lives who should not be better than the law requires him to be. There is no man who should not be more generous than is required of him by public sentiment. There is no man who ought not to be a better man than his circumstances require. You are to set your standard high. Always the ideal is ahead of us. It is not only for the young mariner to follow the gleam; it is also for the wise and aged Merlin. Broader and brighter the gleam flies onward with the years.

> Wed to the melody
> Sung through the world.

Old and weary the true soul is still eager to follow, to live by the glorious dream of what a soul may be. Let us hold the light of the ideal over our passions and appetites, over our habits and duties, over every institution and relation, over all social economies, over all political life, over all pleasure. Let us grow not according to any poor low measure but according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Even in old age,

> Launch your vessel,
> And crowd your canvas,
> And, ere it vanishes
> Over the margin,
> After it, follow it,
> Follow the gleam.

To be disinterested is to be strong, and the world is at the feet of him whom it cannot tempt. Why? Because spirit is lord of matter, and the world belongs to God. "Be of good cheer," saith a heavenly voice. "I have overcome the World."—*Amiel.*

The Housing Problem.

By F. W. LAWRENCE, M.A.

[In "The Heart of the Empire"—a work which we would earnestly commend to every Social Reformer—there is a condensed and closely handled discussion of the urgent Housing Problem by Mr. F. W. Lawrence, from which we venture to quote the author's chief conclusions.]

1. Upon the politician I would urge the special importance of recognising the true nature of city growth, and of taking steps to direct it into healthy channels. I would further urge upon the politician the desirability of formulating some statesmanlike scheme for the future by which the community may gain for itself some part, at least, of the increased value of urban rent. There must be expenditure of money by the local authority in bringing health and fresh air to the city, by providing main arteries, and preserving extensive open spaces. At the same time it must be entrusted with the initiation of a comprehensive scheme of transit.

2. I would urge that the Local Government Board should be instructed to allow the full period of sixty years for repayment by local bodies building houses for the working classes, except for any special reason shown; and, moreover, I would propose that the law should be modified so that a longer period should be allowed for that part of the loan which is required for the purchase of the land. I would suggest the abolition or extensive modification of the clauses which make it obligatory upon local bodies to re-house in the neighbourhood a large part of the population displaced by demolition of insanitary areas. I would urge that greater pressure should be brought to bear upon landlords who own insanitary property.

3. Upon municipalities, I would urge the importance of looking some way ahead; of making adequate provision to safeguard the growth of our cities where such possibility is in their hands; of doing their utmost to secure open spaces and broad thoroughfares; of gradually enforcing the demands of the medical officer; of building houses where it seems necessary for the working classes up to the full requirements of sanitary conditions, and charging for them a rent which shall not be a burden on the rates; of demolishing insanitary areas generally, leaving them as

open spaces, and frankly recognising that such undertakings must be of an unremunerative character.

4. Upon manufacturers I would urge the importance, as far as possible, of taking their works outside the great commercial centres; of founding, if occasion offers, small townships where they can see that proper accommodation can be provided for their workpeople.

5. Upon landlords I would urge the necessity of setting their house in order. I do not ask that they should deprive themselves by reducing their rents, though I would point out that, by making their rents a little below rather than a little above the nominal rate, they will, at scarcely any loss to themselves, secure a better class of tenants, and confer a benefit upon the community. But I do demand that they should see that their houses are fit for human habitation; that they should insist that a decent article is provided, whatever price they ask for its use.

6. Upon the working classes, in addition to doing their best to keep their houses clean and in good order, I would urge above all things that they should recognise the value of sufficient air space, that they should be willing to make some sacrifice of comforts, and even of apparent necessities, in order to obtain this priceless requirement.

7. To the general public I would say: Take more care of the suburbs of your large towns; insist that they grow healthily and well; bring more pressure to bear upon bad landlords, and induce manufacturers to set up their businesses in smaller centres. But, above all, care a little more about the question. These families whom you are depriving of a full life are the families of the nation; these men are doing the nation's work; these women are the mothers of the next generation; these children are the race that is to come. If, through your ignorance, or indifference, their lives are wasted fretting against the cruel bars of their prison, the blame will rest with you.

Do not let the century go by without finding a solution to this problem.

Thorns may be woven into a chaplet; and such a crown, though it tear and scar the brow, is the emblem of a royalty like Christ's.—*Charles Beard.*

National Conference Guilds Union.

THE GUILD IDEA.*

The first object of the Guild is to provide a link between the Sunday School and the Church, between the religious susceptibilities of early life and the critical time when the attractions and excitements of the worldly life press in upon the young soul with almost magical power. The second object of the Guild is to unite the numerous volunteers in Church and Sunday School work into a league of fellowship. In its complete development the Guild will be a federation of the various classes, societies, clubs, and institutions that exist especially for helping the young life as it embarks on its great interests. The Guild seeks primarily to retain amid an appropriate religious environment those who have grown up and are approaching manhood in our homes and schools. It steps in at a time when the young are feeling the spell of influences, many of which would draw them away from the best things, and by providing counter-attractions under the auspices of the Church, would make Worship a joy, and not a servitude; Responsibility an inspiration, not a burden; and Service for others a daily sweetness. So much of the religious life of the young perishes for lack of three things—(1), systematic instruction; (2), self-expression; (3), hearty and gracious encouragement. The Guild aims at imparting religious knowledge, at encouraging the young to take part in the conduct of religious services, and at nourishing the strength, buoyancy, and enthusiasm which arise from a sense of companionship in great interests.

A Guild, or something corresponding to a Guild in idea and work, is as necessary a part of Church activity as a Sunday School. The Debating Class, Reading Circle, Cricket, Football, and Cycle Clubs, Recreation Evenings, and the Social Gatherings of the Young, as well as their Bible Classes and more directly religious work, should also be branches of the Guild. It is one great aim of the Guild to banish from the minds of the young the mischievous division between secular and sacred. It therefore combines in itself, and by its own agencies, scope for athletics, for dramatic and musical faculty,

* We reprint a leaflet just issued by the Guilds Union. Copies may be obtained of the Secretary.

for social enjoyment, no less than for kindly service, earnest truth-seeking, and reverent worship. The Guild would organise the young life of our parishes, churches, and schools; not in any Pharisaical or pietistic temper, but in the broad, sane, and human spirit of Jesus. It would include every social pursuit, proper to youth. It would bring together the young of all classes of society in a fellowship where class distinctions should be forgotten. It would stimulate mental growth, helping its members to form and express their thoughts. The Guild would be the servant of the Church by providing workers for its institutions, and by making the Church a centre of fascinating interest for its rising sons and daughters.

In forming a Guild, the first thing is to bring together the Sunday School teachers and the various workers in the Church to form the nucleus of the new organisation. Without the emphatic encouragement of their teachers and elders, the young will be very reluctant to make the stand for religion which the Guild idea requires. But from the first the young would be expected to take an active part in the conduct both of business and meetings. It is fatal to a Guild that everything should be done for it by the elders. The Guild is to develop the capacity of self-government, and to call forth hidden powers by imposing grave responsibilities. The meetings for worship, whether weekly or monthly, should be the pulse of the whole machine. Here also various members should take part, one giving out a hymn, another reading the lesson, another leading in the responses, another delivering a short address, or bringing some quotation to illustrate the subject previously announced. The work of the Guild, as distinct from its social and recreative side, should be so arranged as to call forth the many-sided energies of the young, giving to each member some special duty.

Most of the great Churches of Christendom have fonnd it necessary to pay far greater attention to their young people in modern times than in ancient days. And the Churches have greatly increased their strength and vitality by the creation of Guilds. It remains for us to follow so striking an example; but, of course, in our own fashion—working out a form of the Guild idea which shall be sympathetic with the genius, history, and position of our Free Churches.

Further information with respect to the formation and conduct of Guilds may be obtained on application to the Rev. John Ellis, Broomhill, Sheffield, *who will also, when desired, arrange for a deputation to attend a preliminary meeting.*

The following are the officers of the National Union :—

President—Rev. Joseph Wood, Birmingham.
Vice-President—Rev. C. Hargrove, M.A., Leeds.
Treasurer—H. P. Greg, Esq., Styal, Manchester.
Secretary—Rev. John Ellis, Sheffield.

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Rev. H. Gow, B.A., Leicester.
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Rev. J. J. Wright, Chowbent.
Rev. Henry Shaen Solby, M.A., Bridport.
Miss Gittins, Leicester.
Miss Florence Hill, Hampstead.
Mr. Ion Pritchard, Essex Hall.
Mr. Harold Coventry, Liverpool.
Mr. F. Talbot, Highgate.
Mr. C. Wood, Birmingham.

Use Your Eyes.

Just one hundred years ago an artist and engraver walked the streets of Munich supperless, breakfastless, and too poor to buy the metal plates on which to reproduce the work of his pencil. He paused a moment on the threshold of his dwelling. It was early autumn, and there had been a storm over night. The morning sun glittered upon the yet undried puddles in the street, and the leaves shorn from the old lindens were scattered upon the sidewalks. One large leaf lay upon the stone step at the artist's feet. Mechanically, he stooped and picked it up. Where it had reposed he beheld its perfect outline, with every rib and vein, drawn upon the smooth surface of the stone in the rain-dissolved dust.

For a moment he stood twirling the leaf in his fingers, studying the impression on the stone with eyes in which the light of a new hope glowed and deepened. Then he turned about and hurriedly re-entered the house. He had conceived an idea. It was simply to use smooth slabs of cheap stone similar to the doorstep, in place of the costly metal plates. Thus was born

the art of lithography, by which process all our finest colour printing is done. Thousands of persons before this day had seen leaf impressions on wet pavements, and many had admired their beauty; but he was the first with powers of observation sufficiently trained to make use of the discovery.

A workman one day set a basin of water, the interior of which was covered with plaster of Paris, upon a red-hot stove. His purpose was to warm the water, with which he wished to wash his hands; but, when he lifted the vessel from the fiery stove he found its contents almost as cold as when placed there. The majority of persons would have been satisfied with an exclamation "How odd!" but this man was an observer. He perceived that the plaster of Paris was so perfect a non-conductor of heat that it preserved the water's temperature against the effects of the glowing stove; and he at once applied his observation in the construction of fire-proof safes. Hitherto the safe made of iron, lined with wood, became, in a conflagration, as hot within as without and the contents were always scorched, and often burned to a crisp.

Anthony Trollope, the novelist, was for many years a post-office official; and his efficiency was largely due to his trained habit of observation. He once visited the office of a certain postmaster in Ireland, formed an unfavourable opinion of the man, and observed him, in the course of the interview, carefully lock a large desk in the office. Two days afterward there came from headquarters an urgent inquiry about a lost letter, the contents of which were of considerable value. It was late in the night, but Trollope hired a horse, and, riding hard, knocked up the postmaster whom he had interviewed a few days before. He walked straight into the office, and said, "Open that desk." The key, he was told, was lost. With one kick he smashed the desk, and there found the stolen letter.

When President Washington visited Harvard College, he was observed to "fix his eye" upon a framed drawing on the museum wall. It was a copy of the Dighton inscription, hitherto supposed by historical students to be the work of the ancient Phœnicians, and to establish the fact of early voyages by that people to America. Washington smiled at the information thus given him, and said he believed that the learned gentlemen were mistaken. His early life had taken him much into the wilderness, and given him the opportunity to become acquainted with the customs of the Indians. He had often seen them strip off the inner bark of a tree, and on the smooth surface leave some record of their rude inscriptions, and could not fail to notice the resemblance of the characters to these copied from the rock. The President's accuracy of observation thus first suggested what has since been abundantly proved.

Professor Palmer once told a class of young ladies that, in order to make their future life interesting, the first rule was not to look only, but to observe; to put themselves into their situation, and understand it on all sides. "Observe, observe in every direction," he urged; "keep your eyes open. Go forward, understanding that the world was made for your knowledge; that you are to enter in and possess it."

October.

We are drinking the wine of the ages
From cups that are brimming over
With the sweet of a honey unbought with money,
Distilled from the heart of the clover.

The fathomless blue of the heaven,
The beauty and bloom of the day,
Are making us young,—they are waking the tongue
Of the years that have passed away.

'Tis the radiant, rare October,
With the clusters ripe on the vine,
With scents that mingle in spicy tingle
On the hill slope's glimmering line.

And summer's a step behind us,
And autumn's a thought before,
And each fleet sweet day th t we meet on the way
Is an angel at the door.

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WHITEHALL CHAMBERS, COLMORE ROW,
BIRMINGHAM.

Letters for the Editor to be sent to 120, Gough Road, Birmingham.

The Martyred President.

Within the last few weeks a common sorrow has spread throughout the civilized world, for the moment binding all nations together in sympathy and tender regard. The assassination of President McKinley sent a thrill of horror vibrating through all the earth, but nowhere was it more felt than in England. Not one in ten thousand of us had ever seen his face. An ocean separated us from him; he ruled over another State; and yet at such an hour as this we feel that William McKinley was indeed bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; that the great race which reads the Bible and Shakespeare in the same mother-tongue on both sides the Atlantic, whatever differences of policy may divide its various fractions, is yet but one people. This is not the place to dwell on the details of the dastardly crime, nor to discuss plans for the repression of Anarchism. But it is fitting we should give some expression to the sorrow we share with our brethren in America under the tragic and horrible event which has taken away their chief citizen and magistrate. We mourn with them in their heavy bereavement. We honour with them the memory of the brave, honest, kindly man, who filled with uprightness and quiet dignity the high office to which he was called. No one claims for him great genius. He was the honest and laborious servant of his country, who won, by sterling qualities of character, and a single-minded devotion to the interests of the State, the confidence of a great people. There was about him a certain puritanic simplicity, both in his domestic life and his public career, in marked contrast to the vulgar, purse-proud, ostentatious luxury of so many of the wealthy people about him. When he knew that he must die, he met the verdict with manly courage, with tender concern for others, with spiritual faithfulness, and in his last words he committed himself to the God whom he had tried to serve in life. His death is a sad, grave, solemn call to Christian men and nations to grapple more earnestly, more intelligently, and more resolutely with the social conditions which produce the hideous and pitiful disease of assassination. It is true improved conditions will not rid the world of crime and misery, and as much wretchedness may lurk within palaces of marble as hovels of mud. But the problem of Anarchy is wrapped up with conditions for all that, and until the modern State learns how to lessen the volume and intensity of the social misery arising from bad conditions, Anarchists of the degraded type of Czolgosz will go on breeding in the shadow of our cities. With renewed humility, and a severer determination we must work together for a new order of social righteousness, in which it will have become impossible for the passions which issue in such dastardly crimes to exist.

Love Triumphant.*

(Buffalo, 6th September, 1901.)

When in that Hall of Music music ceased,
Jarred into silence by the hellish sound
Of pistol shots that rang the whole world round,
And he, the welcoming friend of great and least,
Fell smitten by a man half man half beast,
I saw above the piteous bleeding wound
One bending, sad, with thorns His head was crowned.
"Has brotherhood," He sighed, "no more increased?"
But as He spake far over sea and land
Words borne on lightning wings came flashing fast,
The air was filled with one great sobbing cry—
God spare his life who gave a friendly hand
Even to the slayer! Nations stared aghast.
But love, not hate, had won the mastery.

H. D. Rawnsley.

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* This fine sonnet appeared in the *Daily News*, September 16th, 1901.

STATUE OF KING ALFRED AT WANTAGE.

The Commemoration of King Alfred.

In the city of Winchester, on Friday, September 20th, Lord Rosebery unveiled Hamo Thorneycroft's colossal statue of King Alfred. A thousand years have passed since the great hero's bones were laid in Winchester Cathedral. The idea of celebrating the thousandth anniversary of that notable day belongs to Mr. Frederick Harrison. Under his inspiration a large and influential committee was formed with the object of setting up in Alfred's own city some worthy memorial of his greatness. At the unveiling a great company of England's representative men assembled to do honour to England's noblest king.

Thanks to the work of Freeman, Stubbs, and Green, Alfred is better known to-day than at any time since the Norman conquest. That event obscured for a while the name and work of Alfred. By and by popular legends took the place of history, and for centuries Englishmen knew little more of one of the world's noblest heroes than the stories of the harp and the cakes. To-day he stands out clearly from the mists of legend and story as still the finest figure produced by the purely Anglo-Saxon stock, the highest type of what we still love to regard as the real English character, the actual "blameless" king, far more real than that imaginary King Arthur who has drawn to him the painter, sculptor, and poet.

The critics may rob the schoolbooks of their favourite stories; they may deny the cakes and rob Oxford of her legendary founder, but still in the pages of Asser and the English Chronicles the living figure will stand out, far more marvellous than any legend, far more fascinating than any subsequent creation of mediæval fiction. For whatever may have been destroyed of the story of Alfred, far more has been added by the light of modern historical research. Alfred now stands out as the saviour of the Anglo-Saxon race in its darkest hour, the first preserver of the English language, and the founder of English learning and piety. We can now see that unless Alfred had continued his desperate fight in the marshes of Athelney, the England of the ninth century would have ceased to be either Christian or Saxon. The Saxon language would have probably died out, and Saxon civilisation disappeared. We cannot say what we should have been to-day. All we know is that we should not have been Englishmen.

In honouring Alfred, then, we have an opportunity for patriotism in the truest and noblest sense. For, though Alfred was a great soldier, he used his military skill not to conquer other lands, but to save his own, and when his victory was accomplished he became as great a master of peace as of war. The king who never knew when he was defeated, and snatched victory out of the very gulf of ruin, could lay aside his sword as willingly as he took it up. He collected round him the learned men of Wales and Ireland, and in the intervals of laborious kingship became himself the writer of books for his people, their chief author and teacher, as well as their King, judge, and general. Every schoolboy knows how he translated the Consolations

of Boetius, and, with a pardonable deceit, turned it from a book of philosophy into a work of Christian devotion. But it is not the books that he wrote which hold our attention—it is the man as his Welsh worshipper describes him, the diligent searcher after knowledge, the strict economiser of time, with his trick of the measured candles, the sweet and courteous friend, the patient suffering worker, never free from the shadow of his illness, but never subdued to weariness or despair. Such is the true Alfred; and we know that his life and character left a deep impression on the English race. It was a life of duty, rooted in religious faith. Nine centuries before Wordsworth wrote his "Ode to Duty" Alfred had given the English people such an ode in his own story. Valiant, gentle, sagacious, magnanimous, there was a ring of authority in his moral nature. His ethics were not learned in any school of philosophy. The Ten Commandments, the Psalms, and the New Testament were his teachers. His life of duty was deepened and solemnised by a sense of living ever in the great Taskmaster's Eye, and of owing responsibility to Him. Alfred was sure that there was a righteous Ruler of men and nations, a King of Kings to Whom he must give account of his kingship; a Judge of all the earth who would try every man's work as by fire. It was God's world he was living in, where God's laws must be reverenced and obeyed. He had that large, simple religiousness which belongs to the saviours of the human race. Alfred was a man of fervent piety; and it remains true that no Englishman who has been inaccessible to the religious motive has accomplished anything considerable for his country.

Freeman tells us that Alfred is "the most perfect character in history; a singular instance of a prince who has become a hero of romance—who, as a hero of romance, has had countless imaginary exploits attributed to him, but to whose character romance has done no more than justice, and who appears exactly in the same light in history and in fable. In no other man on record were so many virtues disfigured by so little alloy. A saint without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in defence of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained by cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity nor lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph—there is no other name in history to be compared with his."

That is a glowing eulogy, and it does not appear to be overdone.

"The Angelus" of Millet, or Worship.

The three most important pictures of Jean François Millet are, I think, "The Angelus," "The Sower," "The Gleaners." They represent severally Worship, Labour, Charity. I know of no more effective symbolism of this trinity of relations toward God and man than these three pictures, and I would that they were worthily represented in stained windows in all churches where this could fittingly be done. The deep lessons which underlie them shall never grow old with changing creeds, but shall meet all the needs of the soul, and be in tune with the universe for ever. While the earth remaineth, Worship, Labour, and Charity shall not cease.

I would that "The Angelus," especially, beautifully wrought, with the two worshipping peasants in the foreground and the village church in the dim background, might look down upon every worshipper in the congregation. I think it would do much to communicate to him or her that worshipful, devout, humble, trustful, reverent spirit without which rest and peace come not to the soul.

The "Angelus" represents the worshipful soul. The "Sower" represents the solemn dignity of all true labour and its divine significance in the universal plan. The "Gleaners" represents adequately that element which must accompany all true charity,—the element of corresponding effort by the recipient in accordance with his ability, the element of *gleaning*, in short.

So should we have a series whereby Worship "in the beauty of holiness," Labour, "working *the works of God*," and Charity, "going about doing *good*," would ever symbolize to us their beneficent meanings.

Worship is the breath of God, Labour is the hand of God, and Charity is the smile of God.

I see a great future before that church, or group of churches, which shall definitely set before the world this *new* Trinity, to supplant the *old*, this simple, universal, eternal creed of Worship, Labour, and "all-enclosing Charity."

These pictures, too, have associations with what most hold dearest in the past. They are imbued with the best spirit of the Bible. Few probably ever loved the Bible more than did Millet. When he painted "The Angelus," he thought of Isaac going out "to meditate in the field at the eventide." When he painted "The Sower," he thought of the sower going forth to sow his seed. When he painted "The Gleaners," he thought of Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz "amid the alien corn."

How pathetic and beautiful the scene between Millet and the old curé, the teacher of his boyhood, when after long years the artist returned to his native hamlet!

"And your Bible, François,—have you forgotten it? The Psalms you were so fond of,—do you ever read them now?"

"Yes, father, they are my breviary," replied François. "'Tis there I find all that I paint."

"I seldom hear such words now," said the old curé, with a sigh of thankfulness.

And not only in the church would I have these three pictures. I would have good reproductions of them in every home; and from time to time I would have the eye muse and lovingly rest upon them, and the soul absorb some of their eternal meanings.

And now immediately to "The Angelus."

The Bible of the race is slowly writ. It is wider than the pages of any book, however prized and revered, and comprehends every inspired word that was ever uttered anywhere through literature, art, and music. One of the sublimest pages in this wider Bible is Millet's "Angelus." As perhaps no picture, even of the past, when religion was more the direct inspiration of art than it is to-day, and cathedrals rose on the soarings of fervent spirits, it communicates the permanence of the religious sense, which religious sense can be briefly set down in barest simplicity as this,—humble trust in God.

Let me outline in detail the subject of the picture. Two peasants, man and wife, have borne the burden of the day. It is the potato harvest. Their daily toil is nearly done. The rooks fly homeward, solemn and silent, straggling through the sky, to the tall ancestral elms in some neighbouring wood; and they, too, will soon wend them slowly homeward with the produce of their toil to their lowly cottage in yonder village where the steeple points to the sky. From early morning he has been digging up potatoes. She first pulls up the withered plants and heaps them for burning. Many of these heaps which she has piled tell already of many toilsome days; and mounded rows, where dried tops glitter in the sunset light, still tell of toilsome days to come. He digs with his fork, careful lest he should pierce a potato with the tines, then, standing firm, levers up the clinging load, spreads out the potatoes, and breaks the clods. She stoops and picks them up, chafes off the crusted soil with her hands, and lays them smooth and bright in a basket, which, when full, she empties into the waiting sacks propped upon the wheelbarrow. A small portion of one of two sacks yet remains to be filled. A few unpicked potatoes, just turned up, gleam along the ground. The fork stands idle, fixed upright in the earth.

Her body aches with stooping. Her heads are stiff with the coating soil and with the chafing and pulling. His legs drag wearily after him.

In such monotonous labour pass the days and years, *and they murmur not.*

The early twilight of autumn is softly falling. The breaking clouds above are touched with rosy glow. The wide-spreading level plain glimmers and fades in the far horizon. It is eventide. Earth and air and sky are in mystic union blent. In the changing light, glows and glooms and vistas of changing glories alternate play. One is awed in the presence of vague and solemn mysteries. There are whisperings in the air such as the Maid of Orleans heard when she guarded her sheep at Domremy. Familiar objects loom large and ominous. Trees have spiritual meanings, and seem to float and dream in the air. Fast lines are blurred and eliminated, all merges and passes fluidly, one thing into another. The eye is not distracted by detail, but is overawed by vastness and intensity. Immensity broods over all with solemn tenderness. Gentle yearnings stir in the soul, a

quiet restfulness descends, and we are lost in the eternal.

Such an hour as this Millet chose for his religious picture. The twilight hour communicates a sense to the receptive soul which even dim chancels and shadowy, vaulted cathedral aisles, though these, too, are subtly potent, cannot communicate.

How well the Roman Catholic Church has understood the needs and calls of the soul, that she should have appointed the Angelus for the twilight hour,—that hour of "dim religious light," a momentary escape into the ideal after weary toil when all unites to lure and sway the soul!

The solemn tones of the far village bell float over the wide plain, fraught with tender memories,—of joyous pealings for weddings and of dolorous tollings for the dead, of passionate welcomings and the pathos of farewells, of the immemorial call to prayer, of births and festivals, of the solemn and joyful happenings of life.

Beneath the belfry yonder the churchyard lies where sleep the forefathers, who married and were given in marriage, who knew summer and winter, and frost and heat, and sowing and reaping, and day and night, and labor and rest even as they, whose feet had worn the paving-stones that lead to the porch by the grassy mounds. Such village bells, at the break of one Easter morn, stayed the hand of Faust, and drew the poison-chalice from his lips with tender thoughts of home and welling-up of tears.

"Chime on, chime on, sweet songs of heaven, chime on,—
The teardrop falls, and earth reclaims her son." *

There is an appeal of deep human pathos and intensity, something that stirs to the depths the heart, bringing back the old familiar faces and the old familiar places, in the sound of village bells, whose power to move he only knows who, after long wanderings, goes back to his childhood's home, and hears their plaintive notes upon the air. From Faust they drew the poison cup, and to him they bring new life, they touch trembling chords of the soul long unstrung, and stir deeps of emotion that had seemed to have vanished with the years.

The Angelus has just sounded. A stiller hush falls on the silent eve. They both reverently rise and pause from labour. He bares his head, and both stand with bowed heads in silent devotion in God's temple of the earth and sky. She clasps her hands before her fervently, her body swaying slightly forward with emotion. He stands soberly.

In that churchyard yonder lies a babe, just a babe, for whom she had mourned and wept long and long, and would not be comforted, and had cried wildly to Mary in the night; and now again, as the Angelus sounds, she repeats her "Angelus Domini" and her "Ave Maria" to the mother, *gratia plena*, full of grace, and *doloroso*, full of grief, who bore all woman's pain. And through this peasant woman's soul something of that intensity moves, of yearning for consolation and for help to bow humbly to her lot, which we hear in Schubert's "Ave Maria" in such pathetic, pleading tones.

Even now I hear the words of that sad, appealing song, wild with the passion and intensity of a maiden who was weak and needed strength aud guidance and holy consolation,—a song than which I know none more moving, moving unto tears,—the words of the maiden who prays to the Holy Mother to guard and protect her in this stern and rocky wild, to keep her pure where men are cruel and fearful, luring dangers threaten her, and that she may bow humbly to her lot with Mary's pitying, loving presence hovering round her.

Some such thoughts as these, and with a like intensity, pass through this young peasant-mother's soul, and to a less degree through that of her husband. He is more formal, she more worshipful.

What matters, after all, whether we pray to the Divine Mother of our dreams, or to Him who is above all and through all and in all, in whom we live and move and have our being,—whom we dare hardly name, save when, like little children, we lisp "Our Father,"—what matters, so that the trust is there, so that the peace descends? Ever different forms of worship, but ever when trust

* Gœthe's "Faust," First Part, lines 430, 431. *Vide* whole passage, lines 409-431.

moves us and peace comes, the self-same spirit.

Ah! I fear often we cease to be humble, and with pride of intellect are borne astray! We know so much more than our fathers knew, our conception of the universe is so different from theirs, our knowledge grows from more to more,—may be! But still the sun rises and sets, and still the moon and the stars shine tranquil in the sky, and still summer succeeds to winter, and sowing to reaping, and night to day, and rest to labour. It is still the same world as before, moved by the same emotions of births, and marryings and givings in marriage, and meetings and long-abidings, and lingerings and farewells, and deaths,—still the same pathos and the same joy; and we still need the larger hope and the deeper trust that can look beyond knowledge, and are clothed in a mystery and vastness knowledge may never pierce. And I fear we often lose that spirit of awe amid daily present mysteries which should ever accompany widening knowledge; and I fear that the old, immemorial attitude of every religious soul of humble trust in Him whose "tender mercies are over all His works," this very essential and foundation of all religion, I fear me, many of us have lost it, this one thing needful, which these simple peasants have found.

They bend again to toil, and calm solace and sweet restfulness have descended upon their souls.

Stand as they in the mysterious gloaming, feel as they the solemn, tender immensity that broodeth over all, and the vague mystery which enfolds and sustains you; go out with the shepherd-patriarch of old to meditate in the field at the eventide; reverence and trust; here, after all, what this simple picture-lesson teaches us is the permanent in religion and the supreme and final wisdom. This reverence and this trust it is that hallow day by day their weary, monotonous toil. This reverence and this humble trust it is that cause these lowly peasants to murmur not. Silent thoughts and emotions stir them, they could not tell; but a restfulness falls upon them. They feel themselves in the presence of a vast and tender brooding power, they yield themselves to its influence, they do not try to solve the mysteries, they are very humble in the presence of the Most High.

This simple trust brought comfort to the weary when knowledge was at its dawn, and shall still bring comfort to the weary when knowledge reaches its full noon-tide splendour,—the simple, heart-felt trust of the patriarchs, and of the prophets, and of the psalmists, and of Jesus, and of Burns Cotter, and of Millet's peasants,—the trust that bringeth peace and lowliness and reverence and contentment with our lot.

These peasants live as their fathers lived. With home and food, and homespun, and health, and work,—and God,—they are content; and they pray that God will bless their children even so. HARROLD JOHNSON.

England's Debt to Wordsworth.

A remarkably brilliant summer has just closed behind us, and crowds of jaded city folk have been renewing their youth on mountain top, on moorland heather, or by the sea. Year by year the exodus is greater, and the range of summer travel wider. Whole classes of society, that only a few years ago never thought of anything more than an occasional day in the country, and a visit to the old family home, now scour vast areas—Wales, Scotland, Switzerland, the Rhine—in search of the glories of nature. We are so familiar with the crowded train and steamer, with cosmopolitan table d'hôte, that we scarcely realise how very new all this is in English life. The actual physical cause of the universal modern holiday is, of course, the large modern city, which uses us up so fast that if we could not, Antæus-like, renew at times our intimate acquaintance with mother earth we should be in danger of extinction through physical and moral anæmia. But the reason why many of us derive such deeper benefits from our annual contact with nature,—how did we secure that gift of the gods? Had we lived in the middle of the last century our feelings towards nature in her wilder aspects would have been quite different. The poet Cowper, who was a genuine lover of natural scenery, yet found the downs of Sussex "frightful." What he would have thought of the Bernese Oberland it is impossible to guess; but we know from history that his

attitude towards the sterner and grander scenery was shared by the majority of civilised mankind until Cowper's own time. Then came a blessed change.

In England the change has been mainly due to the poetry of one man of genius. Doubtless the movement towards intimate association with nature was, as we say, "in the air." Rousseau had been its European prophet, Chateaubriand confirmed the impression Rousseau had made, but the man who impressed for all future time the idea of the sublimity of nature, the idea of her interaction with the mind of man, of her healing power, of her revelation of the divine, was William Wordsworth. The poet tells us in "The Prelude" that to him came early the irresistible conviction that he was a "dedicated spirit," and surely no more hallowed mission was ever entrusted to human genius than that which was laid upon Wordsworth. To interpret nature to those who had been sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to reveal a relation between nature and man that had not been suspected, to steep the mind of a whole people, not for a moment, as some mere *wunderkind* might do, but for future ages, in what Carlyle called "natural-supernaturalism," so that the commonest objects of the roadside irradiate a new glory for those who have caught Wordsworth's spirit,—what Hebrew prophet ever had a more sacred task committed to him? Whatever mere carping criticism may say, whatever jest and sane criticism from the pen of Arnold, Lowell, or Scherer may rightly and profitably suggest, the fact remains that England could have afforded to lose any single one of her poets sooner than Wordsworth, because he has provided her with that sublime idealism which a strong, naturally materialistic race most needed. We will risk being misinterpreted when we say that not even to Shakespeare do we owe such a debt as to Wordsworth.

The poet wrote, as he himself phrased it, "on man, on nature, and on human life," these varied elements—the nature and destiny of the race, the forms of the external world, and the daily cares and needs of individuals—being first blended, in the course of English poetry, into a noble unity. We get no such impression in the joyous verse of Chaucer, in the profound meditation of Shakespeare, in the grand strains of Milton. Whatever they knew or thought of nature, they had not related it to man; that glorious bridal ceremony—to use his own imagery—was effected by Wordsworth. It was he who divined the one spirit whose "dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean, and the living air, and in the mind of man,"—though we must not in justice forget Pope's more classic approximation to this great conception of a world penetrated all through with living divine power. How childish and jejune seem the nature-poems of the years immediately preceding Wordsworth, the pretty platitudes of Gray and Goldsmith, even the larger and more living treatment of Cowper, beside passages from the "Excursion," "There was a boy, ye cliffs and islands of Winander," "Tintern Abbey," "Michael," "The Solitary Reaper," "The Yew Trees of Lorton Vale," "Daffodils," and many another poem! We read these, and dim traditions of our race gradually take shape in the mind and become living forces, re-setting our whole scheme of things, and yielding us a joy and consolation which may be truly and reverently said to pass all understanding. Yes, for the understanding works by its own rules of analysis, governed by curiosity, and often, as Wordsworth says, it "murders to dissect." But in these blessed poems the sundered world is recreated, the sick mind is healed, the living unity is revealed, we are made one with nature, but with a nature which is, as "Faust" has it, no dead fact, but the living garment of Deity. If Wordsworth has done this for us, are we not justified in claiming for him the unique position he holds in the literature of England?

Wordsworth, who disliked analysis and dissection, nevertheless believed firmly that science must come round to his view. It is certainly remarkable that the main ideas of Wordsworth are becoming slowly but surely the watchwords of science, thus showing that the poetical mind does not give forth as its products mere beautiful fancies, but that it really creates, that its function is, as Shelley said in his magnificent "Defence of Poesy," to anticipate the conclusions of analytic reason. The poet early sees what others painfully discover. Wordsworth saw the unity of the world, the oneness of man with nature, now the corner-stone of science. He saw that this unity was not to be interpreted in terms of the lowest, but of the highest; that the lowliest life ministered to, and was to be comprehended in relation to, the highest. And he saw, as perhaps the great intellect of Shakespeare did not see, the fundamental beneficence

of the world. All that we behold, he says, "is full of blessing," and he staked his faith to that. His successor in the Laureateship found his faith almost wrecked by "Nature red in tooth and claw," and could only "faintly trust the larger hope." That was in the pre-Darwinian days; and the early study of Darwin seemed to confirm Tennyson's view in "In Memoriam." But science is diving into a far deeper sea, and the mind, bent on a profounder view of things, is now declaring for Wordsworth's standpoint as against that of Tennyson's earlier mood. No possible living world, says Alfred Russel Wallace, could give such extended and general joy as the world of actuality; and if only the cloud of evil could be rolled away from mankind, if we could be delivered from our lower selves and our social life be made clean and just, we should probably discover that everything was beautiful in its season, and that the apparent deformities in the world were the creation of human egotism and lust. We say nothing here of the many services rendered by Wordsworth to the humanising of life,—his reverence for lowly, honest toil, his love of the poor, his discovery of the great elements of pathos and tragedy in the humblest lives, his finding of love "in the huts where poor men lie," though in all these elements of his poetry he was a pioneer in the best and happiest work now being done for the good of mankind. We are content to rest Wordsworth's immortal fame on his consecrated task of marrying man to nature in a far deeper sense than did the old nature-worship of Greece,—on his revelation of this marvellous unity in which we live. He saw in vision, to use his own characteristic language, the very pomp of heaven lighting "on ground which British shepherds tread." We should be inclined to appraise the truer inner nature of any well-read and cultivated Englishman by his attitude to Wordsworth.

News from the Field.

GEE CROSS.—The Rev. A. R. Andrae, B.A., began his ministry as a colleague of Mr. Dowson, on Sunday, September 15th. The Rev. J. E. Carpenter gave the address to the pastor, and Mr. Dowson the charge to the church.

MANCHESTER (LONGSIGHT).—Mr. H. J. Rossington, B.A., has received, and accepted, a unanimous invitation to the pastorate of this church. He will enter upon his duties the first Sunday in October.

MANSFIELD.—An interesting series of meetings were held on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 24th and 25th, to commemorate the Bi-centenary of the Old Meeting. The sermon was preached on Tuesday morning by the Rev. Joseph Wood, of Birmingham, who chose for his subject, "The Place of the Church in the Modern World." A Bi-centenary conference was held on Wednesday morning, addressed by the Revs. J. E. Carpenter, B.A., C. H. Wellbeloved, and the pastor, E. I. Fripp. On Wednesday evening a public meeting was held, when the following formidable list of addresses was got through:—Rev. J. Wood on "The Word of God, what is it?" Rev. R. A. Armstrong, "Religious Veracity;" Mr. J. H. White, "A Layman's Duty in Religion;" Rev. F. K. Freeston, "A Church with Open Doors;" Rev. Henry Gow, "A Gospel of Joy;" Rev. E. I. Fripp, "Deserving to Believe."—The Annual Business Meeting of the *North Midland Union* was held on Tuesday afternoon. Various social functions completed the programme.

STOURBRIDGE (*Farewell Presentation*).—The Rev. A. W. Timmis having resigned the pulpit of the Presbyterian Chapel on his acceptance of the post of minister to the Poor at the Renshaw Street Mission in Manchester, the Stourbridge congregation have marked their appreciation of his services during nearly eighteen years by a farewell presentation. Recently a gathering of the members of the congregation and other friends took place in the grounds of Mr A. W. Worthington's house at Old Swinford, among those present being Mr. and Mrs. Worthington, Mr. and Mrs. T. Grosvenor Lee, the Revs. A. W. Timmis, I. Wrigley, and A. H. Shelley. The gifts consisted of a handsome clock, a fine re-production of the old Chippendale style, a silver tea service, and a purse of £50. Mr. Worthington, in making the presentation to Mr. Timmis on behalf of the congregation, spoke of the ties of goodwill, respect, and affection which during many years had united both Mr. and Mrs. Timmis to them, and of the many opportunities which the ministerial life afforded for the forming of such ties. The good-will of the congregation would follow Mr. and Mrs. Timmis to their new home, where they would have a visible memorial of it in that clock. He saw on a sun-dial the other day the words, "I count the sunny hours." He trusted that the clock would remind Mr. Timmis of the many happy hours he had spent in Stourbridge.—Mr. Timmis, in reply, said that he felt quite unable adequately to express what he felt at that moment, deeply moved as he had been by Mr. Worthington's address. He could do very little more than thank from the bottom of his heart their friends for the very great kindness expressed towards them. He was going to Manchester with the hope that he would be able to do some good there. A minister did not live and exert an influence if he did not live to do good. No one could be more conscious than himself of his many faults and failings, but he did hope to do a little good before he died. He hoped that the congregation would flourish in time to come as he had never seen it flourish, and he should always be glad to hear of the welfare of his friends at Stourbridge.

The evil weeds in your neighbour's garden will scatter seeds into your own.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Turk:

A SON OF THE MANSE.

There was a little bundle,—but his name I won't confess,—
Who caused his hapless parents heaps of worry and distress;
Of his deeds I'll give a catalogue, in candour undisguised,
And if it doesn't shock you—well, I shall be much surprised!

His little hands were restless, and to mischief ever prone,
His nails were scarcely cut before to scratching length they'd grown;
He was fond of playing Peep-Bo when he ought to've been asleep,
And he plagued his poor dear mother till she did a little weep.

The things that weren't good for him were those he liked the most—
He refused his lovely bottle, and cried out for buttered toast;
He pulled down all the curtains, and he gave the piano "beans,"
And knocked his mother's ornaments to little smithereens.

He got his daddy's watch, and shook that plaything till it dropped
And was very much surprised to find the tick-tick movement stopped.
With a mad infatuation for a match-box he was struck,
And that he wasn't burnt to death was just a piece of luck.

He crawled up to the coal-box in a lovely white silk frock—
And when we next beheld our child, it gave us quite a shock;
He tore a sermon manuscript to very little bits,
Then swallowed some, and screamed until we nearly lost our wits.

In the small hours he insists on being taken from his cot,
And if we say, "That's naughty!"—well, he doesn't care a lot.
He thinks that 2 a.m. is just the time to romp and play,
So our nights are simply night-mares, and our hair is turning grey.

But although he's such a trouble, and a burden, and a plague,
And though our hopes of ever getting sleep again are vague,
And though our lives will never be as quiet as they've been,
Yet he's worth his weight in diamonds, with a Five Pound note thrown in.

He's the very imp of mischief, and the King of pugilists,
And some day he will slay us with his wicked little fists.
But although he starts his weird career each day at half-past five—
Yet we wouldn't go and change him for the meekest child alive.

J. WARSCHAUER.

Thanks.

Thank you very much indeed,
River, for your waving reed;
Mr. Sun, for jolly beam;
Mrs. Cow, for milk and cream;
Hollyhocks, for budding knobs;
Foxgloves, for your velvet fobs;
Pansies, for your silky cheeks;
Chaffinches, for singing beaks;
Spring, for wood anemones
Near the mossy toes of trees;
Summer, for the fruited pear,
Yellowing crab and cherry fare;
Autumn, for the bearded load,
Hazel nuts along the road;
Winter, for the fairy tale,
Spitting log and bouncing hail;
Christmas Day, for Mary's Child,
Jesus, manifest and mild.

But, blest Father, high above,
All these joys are from your love;
And your children everywhere,
Born in palace, lane, and square,
Cry, with voices all agreed,
THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED!

NORMAN GALE.

The Seaside.

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore:
My holes were empty like a cup,
In every hole the sea came up,
Till it could come no more.

R. L. STEVENSON.